

March 5, 2021

To: The Chair and Members of the Civic Works Committee (CWC)

RE: Friars Way and Doncaster Place Reconstruction/Abbey Rise Reconstruction

Request: Realize the important benefits and value of London's mature tree canopy in the decision to exempt Friars Way and Sherwood Forest streets from installation of sidewalks in the planned road reconstruction.

To the Chair and Members:

The committee members the residents requesting exemption from installation of sidewalks face similar challenges. With continued road construction, you are faced with pushback when cutting down large mature trees in well established neighbourhoods to incorporate sidewalks. Our request is to guard the Benefits of Trees not just for this generation, or until the next plan to be prepared in 2035, but for generations to come. We cannot possibly put the value of losing a 50-year-old tree with a replacement of a new medium sized tree that is on the cities "approval" list and consider this replacement of the tree canopy that meets the guidelines.

We have a unique city that houses unique neighbourhoods. Perhaps we should celebrate this, rather than attempting to bundle each area the same. Why can't we have "new" urban, and "old" historical neighbourhoods that incorporate safety for all.

I have been a resident of Friars Way for 23 years, raising my two adult children here from the ages of 3 and 7 years. I previously owned my home in Old South where we did have sidewalks. I was initially concerned moving into an area without sidewalks, assuming that sidewalks meant 'safety'. Not necessarily.

When a community and families are raised with certain boundaries, we come to respect them and not take for granted what safety might look like. From the way we back out of our driveways, teach our children the true meaning of road safety, coach our visiting family and friends on manoeuvring our streets with no sidewalks or streetlights. Sharing the roadway with bikes, strollers, walkers, hikers, joggers, and wheelchairs as their mode of transportation is our normal here. Everyone welcome. We all pay attention. This clearly confirms that we have an area that provides safe passage for all mobility concerns. I witness driver's travelling at a slower speed paying closer attention, because we do share the roadway.

On a personal note. I have a sister with M.S., relying on her wheelchair as her only mode of transportation. She has a manual and motorized chair. In her neighbourhood (with sidewalks), that does not have the complex inclines of Sherwood Forest, she cannot use her manual chair as her strength is not there to juggle the instability of the sidewalks. Road travel is safer. The motorized chairs can only be used in good weather as sidewalks are never cleared of ice, snow, and excess water on a regular basis in residential areas. I have housed my 87-year-old mother in my home since February 2020 due to Covid-19. We walk daily. We do NOT use the current sidewalks in our neighbourhood, Wychwood

Park, Annadale Dr, Leyton Cres and Lawson Rd in winter months as they are just not safe. We share the roadway. (I will attach photos of confirmation).

We here on Friars Way are not in or near a high traffic area. Our closest public transit is minimum of 10 blocks away on Lawson Rd.

We are not a thoroughfare to enter or exit our neighbourhood. The City of London, years ago, incorporated a median on Wonderland Road (in front of Sherwood Forest mall) at Annadale. The only traffic coming in/out are residence on the street. Any through traffic flow utilizes Lawson Rd.

This neighbourhood is also unique in terms of topography. The curves of the streets with numerous hills and curves naturally slow traffic. Each street was designed to fit into the structure of the land, rather than the developers cutting streets and elevations that conform to their construction plans.

Viewing New Construction area's, we can clearly see the density, and smaller lots, (multi units). The "New" neighbourhoods will not be able to plant the same species of large trees like Lindens and Maples that build our beautiful Forest City canopy, due to size restrictions. Their options of smaller trees along with the 'replacement' trees the city offers will never meet the "distinctive tree status of the City of London Tree Protection Bylaw, as (50cm dbh) requirement.

We cannot continue to disregard the value of these large mature trees that support climate change, soil erosion, deforestation, clean air, and global warming issues.

Equally important, you face issues in "The London Plan" of strategies on saving our canopy, preservation of our Urban Forestry, by "protecting", "maintaining", and "planting more" along with preserving our natural heritage system that in the Medway Valley protected area that Friars Way directly abuts.

The loss of our Mature Street Canopy dismisses our High Value (Asset) of Mature Trees, the Ecological Impact along with climate change, soil erosion, deforestation, clean air, and global warming.

Viewing JUST the upcoming 28 construction plans for 2020 that I have taken directly from the City of London web site, I have noted removal of 155 trees at an age average of 50 years = 7750 years of growth. This was just the initial count 14 of the projects had not recorded potential losses.

How do we equate a plan to replace them with smaller trees and call that replacement or equal value? I challenge the Urban Forest Strategy goal to increase City tree canopy from 21% to 34% by 2065 using the same measure of value. At the current rate of clear cutting our mature neighbourhoods and facing new insect challenges like our current Gypsy Moth dilemma, how do we meet these goals?

How do we address the Climate Emergency Action Plan with the removal of our mature trees?

I invite each one of you to come to our neighbourhood. Bring your walking shoes and walk the walk.

It will soon be apparent on how you can change the plan without losing the vision. (REALIZING THE PLAN 27- The London Plan will be monitored and adjusted over time to adapt to a changing context).

I appreciate your consideration.

Warmest regards

Patti MacLennan